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Paris

Riding the escalator out of the Paris Metro station, Vladimir Kostov felt a sharp sting just above his belt. At the same time he heard a sound like a pebble striking the metal stairs. He turned to face a tall, athletic-looking man who quickly disappeared into a crowd along the Champs-Elysees.

Kostov later learned that the man was an assassin — probably a member of Bulgaria's secret intelligence service. In the eyes of the Bulgarian regime, Vladimir Kostov, a defector to the West and a former member of the Bulgarian Communist Party, was a traitor.

From what was believed to be a fountain pen shaped object, the attacker had fired a poison-filled metallic ball about the size of a pinhead into Kostov's back.

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